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AMAR CHITRA KATHA

No.367 Rs.5/-

Mahabharata-20

ARJUNA'S QUEST FOR WEAPONS

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

DILIP KADAM

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MAHABHARATA

Veda Vyasa's Epic on the Bharata race was first recited in public by his disciple Vaishampayana at the behest of the ageless seer Vyasa himself

The recital took place in the august presence of King Janamejaya—great-grandson of Vyasa—and the many learned sages who had assembled for Janamejaya's Sarpa Satra (a 12-year-long snake sacrifice).

The twentieth session of our rendering of Vaishampayana's recital of Vyasa's epic, the Mahabharata, described how Arjuna helped by his knowledge of the secret art of 'Pratismriti' (a branch of yogic knowledge) and his penance, pleased Indra, Shiva and other gods and acquired celestial weapons from them. The session ended with Indra instructing Arjuna to proceed to Swargaloka to perform some duties for the devas. Indra asked him to await Matali who would take him there in the celestial chariot.

*

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Mahabharata-20

ARJUNA'S QUEST FOR WEAPONS

BIDDEN BY YUDHISHTHIRA, ARJUNA PREPARED TO LEAVE ON HIS QUEST OF ACQUIRING CELESTIAL WEAPONS WITH THE HELP OF THE SECRET KNOWLEDGE OF PRATISMRITI. HE BURNED WITHIN WITH THE DESIRE TO OBTAIN THE WEAPONS FROM INDRA AND SLAY THE SONS OF DHRITARASHTRA.

"HE EQUIPPED HIMSELF WITH THE GANDEEVA *, TWO INEXHAUSTIBLE QUIVERS, ARMOURS, FINGERGUARDS AND A LEATHER ARM-BAND.

"HE THEN OFFERED OBLATION TO THE FIRE GOD AND GOLD COINS TO THE BRAHMANAS. THE LATTER BLESSED HIM, SAYING:

PROCEED ON YOUR MISSION. VICTORY WILL BE YOURS.

* NAME OF ARJUNA'S BOW.

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"SEEING ARJUNA, IN HIS WAR-LIKE ATTIRE, TAKING LEAVE OF OTHERS, DRAUPADI SAID:

O MIGHTY DHANANJAYA!* MAY THE WISHES OF YOUR MOTHER AND YOUR OWN AMBITIONS BE FULFILLED!

AFTER YOU GO IN QUEST OF THE WEAPONS, YOUR BROTHERS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY REMEMBER YOUR VALOUR AGAIN AND AGAIN. WE WILL FIND SOLACE NEITHER IN INDULGENCE NOR IN WEALTH.

I PRAY TO VASU, RUDRA, ADITYA, THE MARUTS AND ALL OTHER GODS— MAY THEY LOOK AFTER YOUR WELL-BEING.

AFTER DRAUPADI BECAME SILENT, ARJUNA CIRCUMAMBULATED HIS BROTHERS AND DEPARTED ON THE JOURNEY.

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* CONQUEROR OF WEALTH (ARJUNA).

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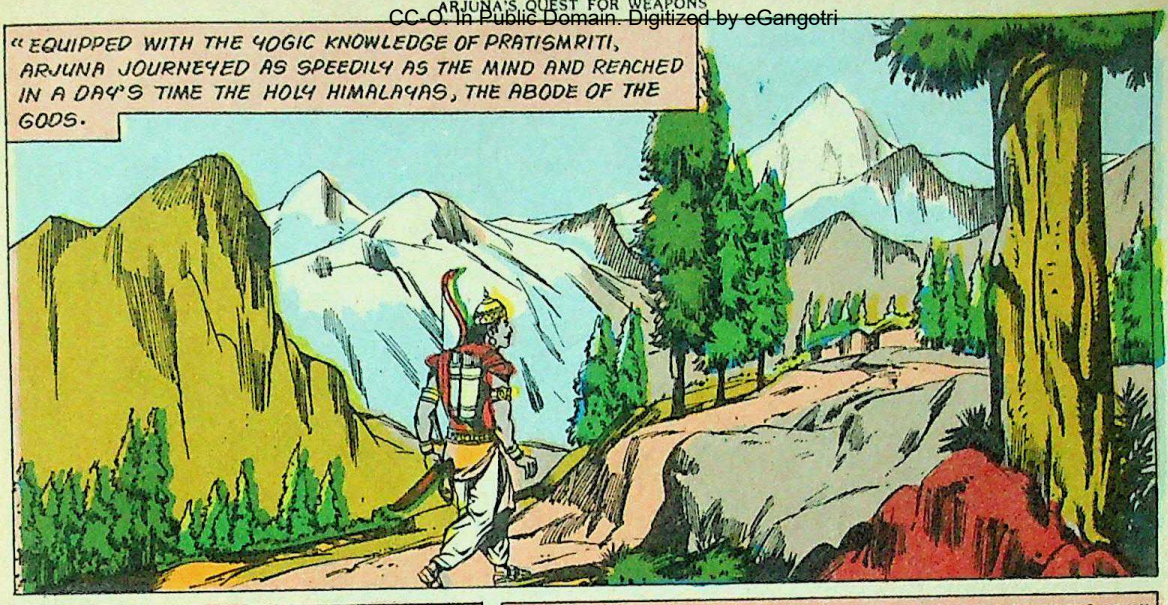

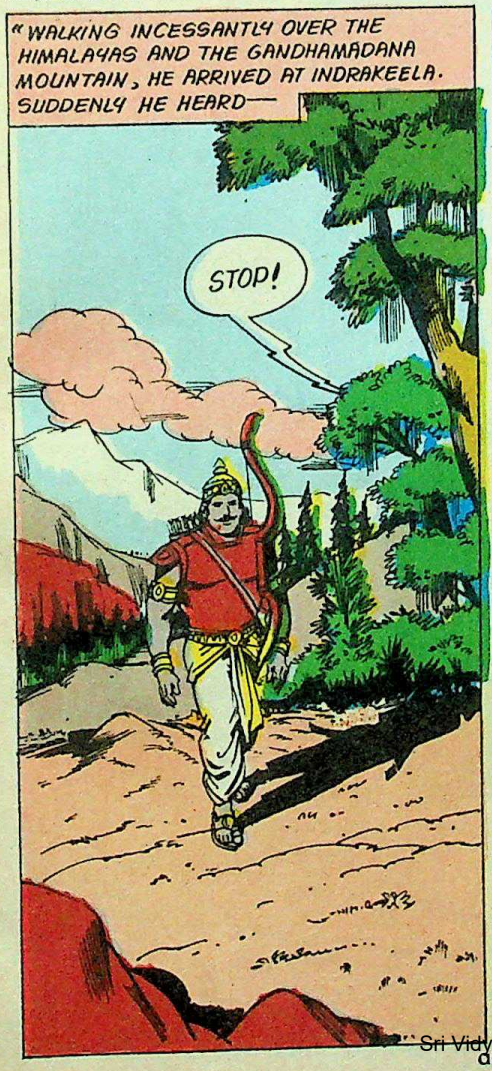

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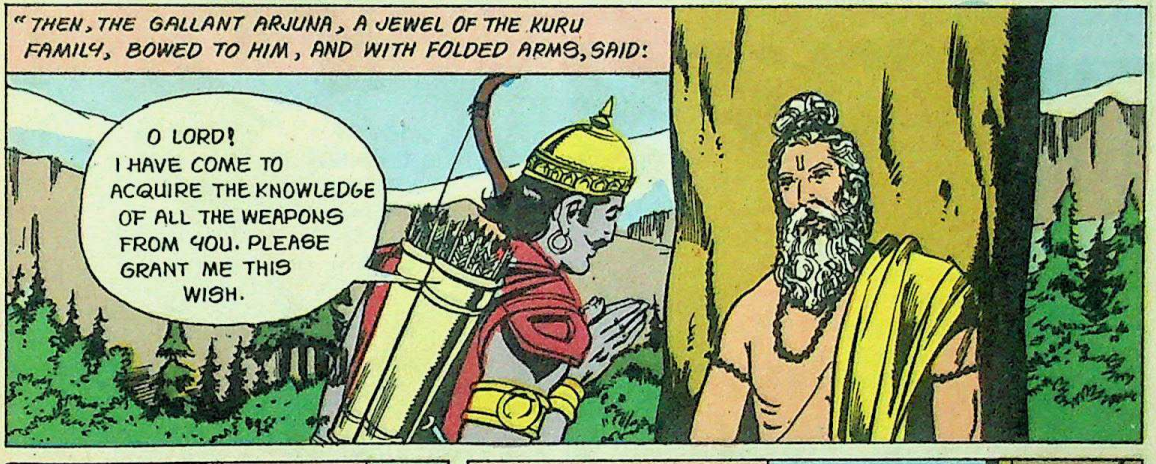

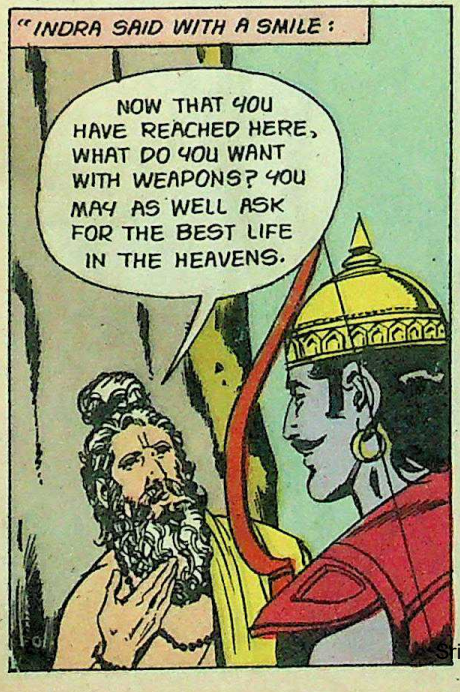

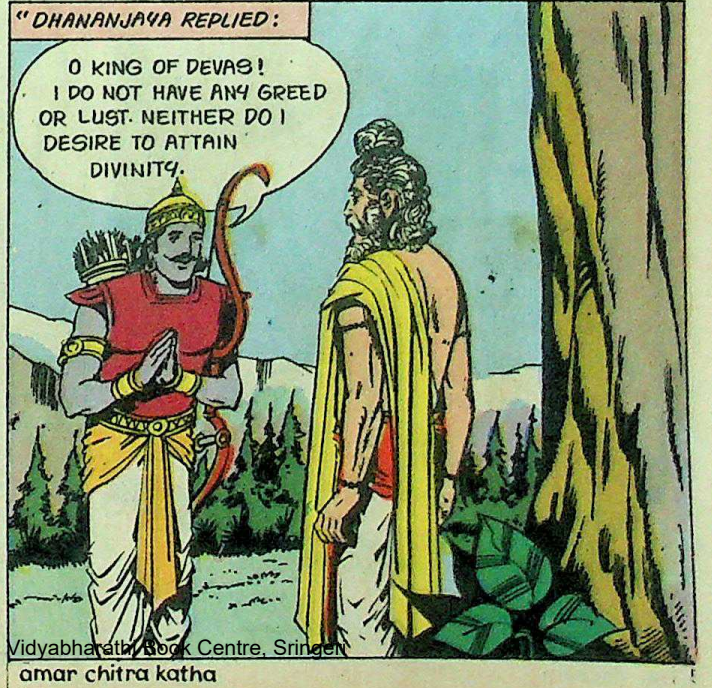

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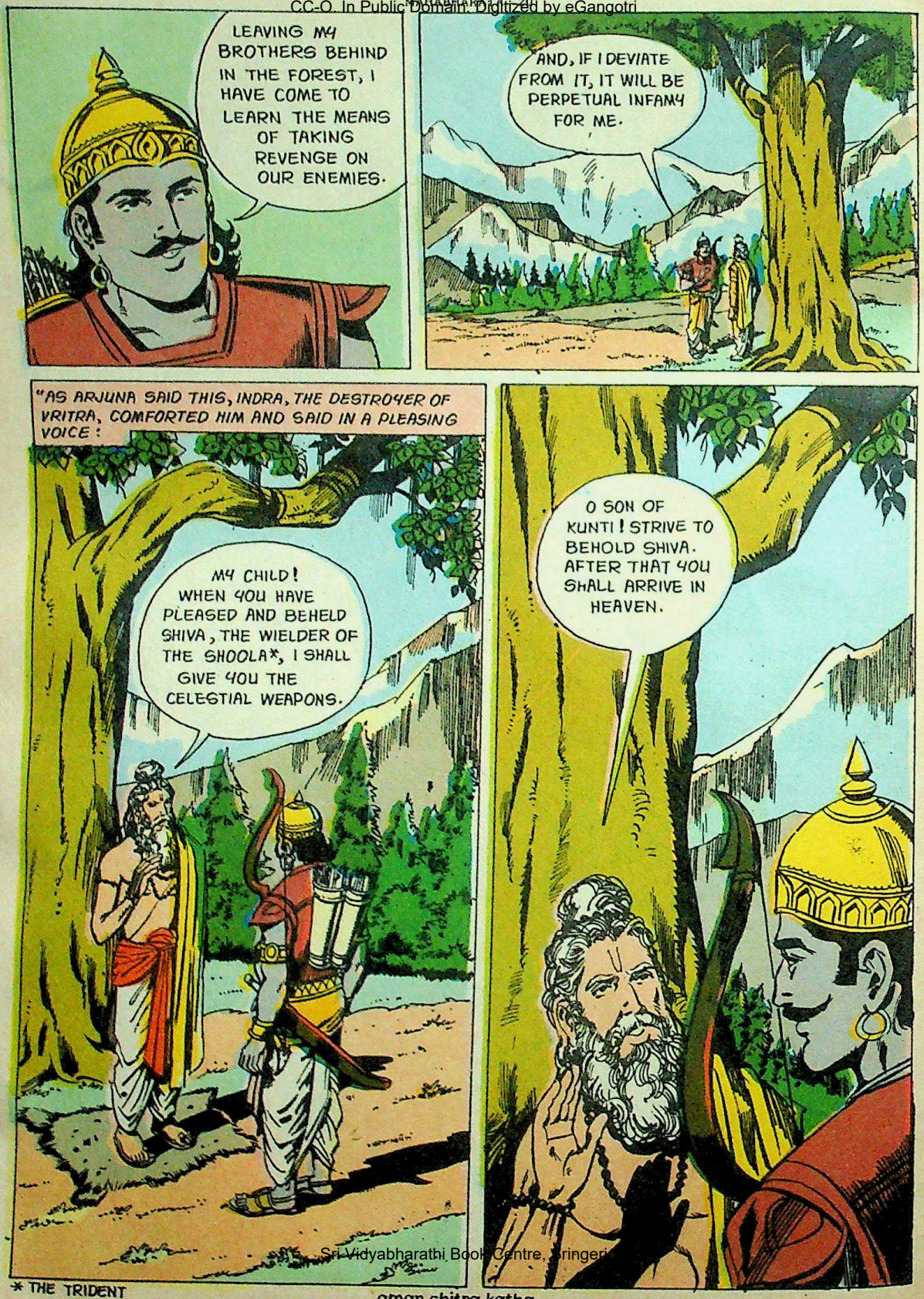

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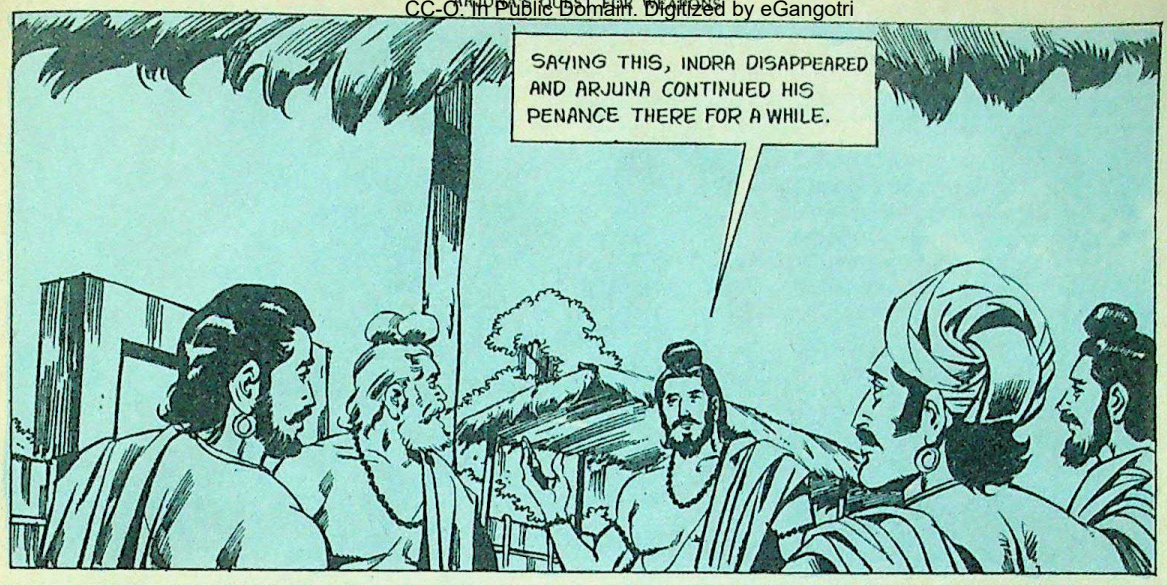

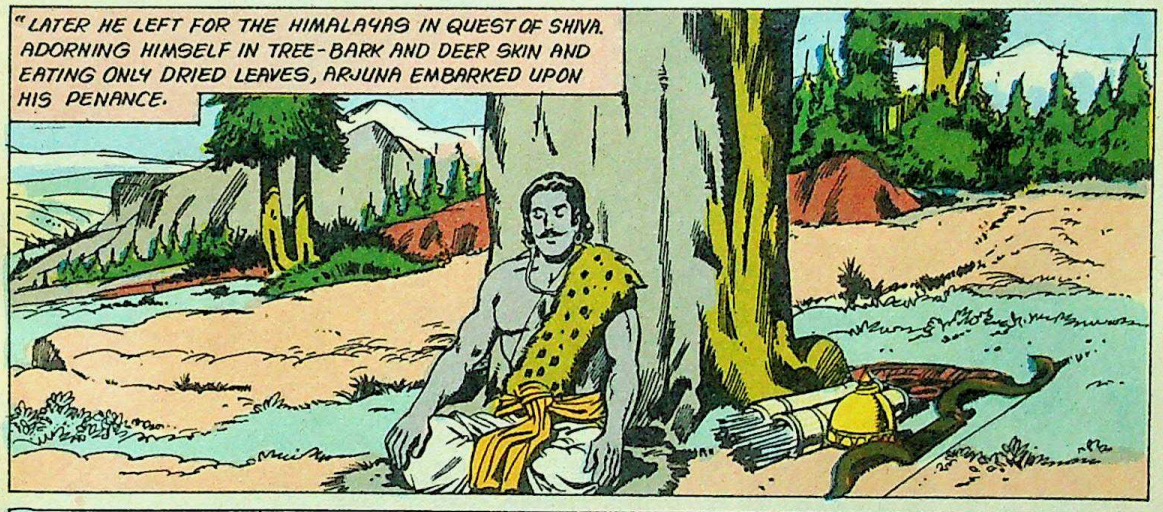

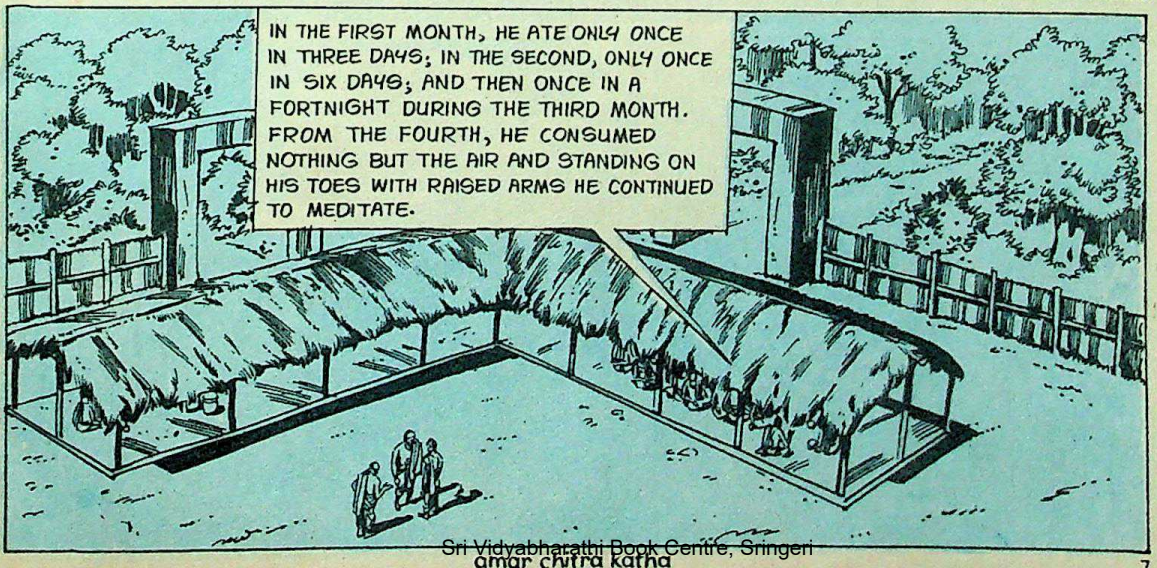

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"ALL THE SAGES WHO WITNESSED HIS GREAT TAPAS* APPROACHED SHIVA TO TELL THE GOD ABOUT IT. BOWING TO HIM THEY SAID:

O LORD OF LORDS! THE SPLENDID ARJUNA HAS BEEN PERFORMING TAPAS IN THE HIMALAYAS AND THE ENTIRE REGION HAS BECOME CLOUDY AS A RESULT OF HIS INTENSE MEDITATIONS.

WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT HE IS AFTER. BUT WE HAVE BEEN MUCH PERTURBED.

PRAY, STOP HIM!

"ON HEARING THESE WORDS OF THE PURE-HEARTED SAGES, THE LORD OF ALL CREATION SAID:

YOU NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT ARJUNA. HE DOES NOT DESIRE THE HEAVEN, WEALTH OR ETERNAL LIFE.

I KNOW WHAT HE HAS COME FOR. TODAY I WILL FULFIL HIS DESIRE.

* SEVERE PENANCE.

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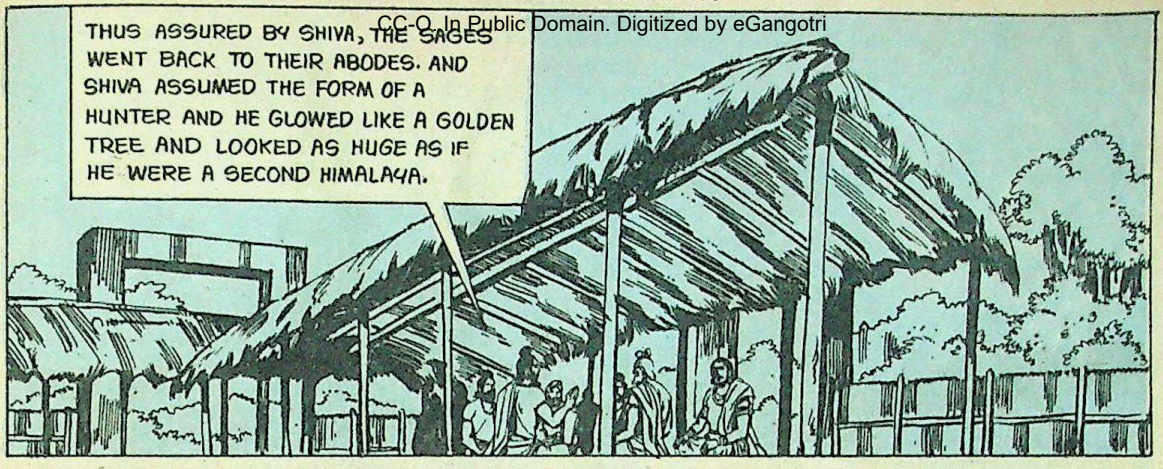

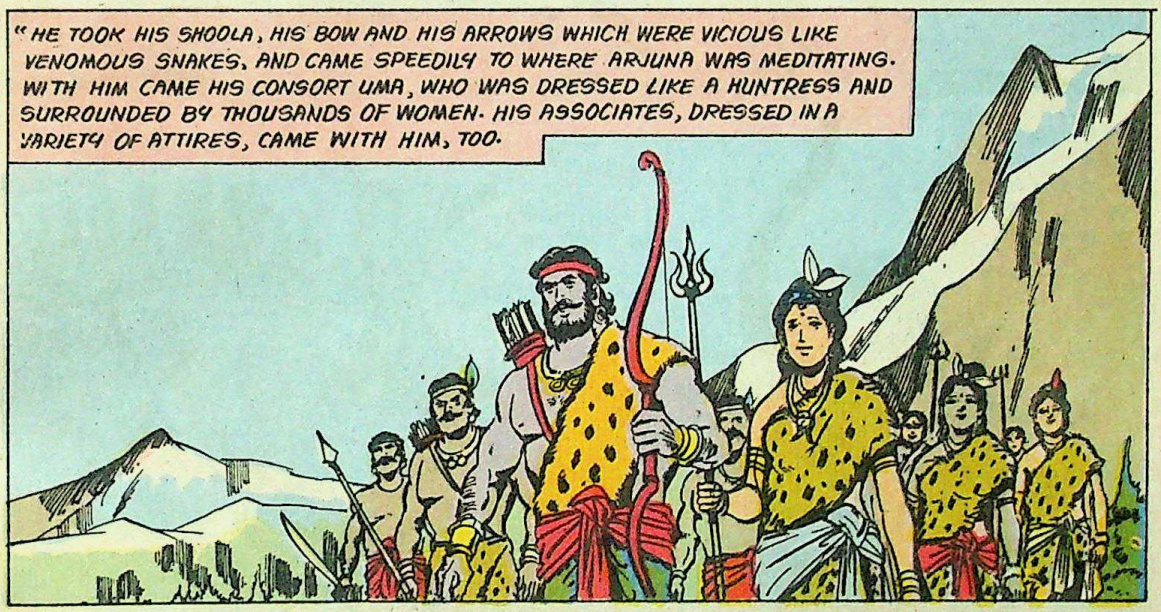

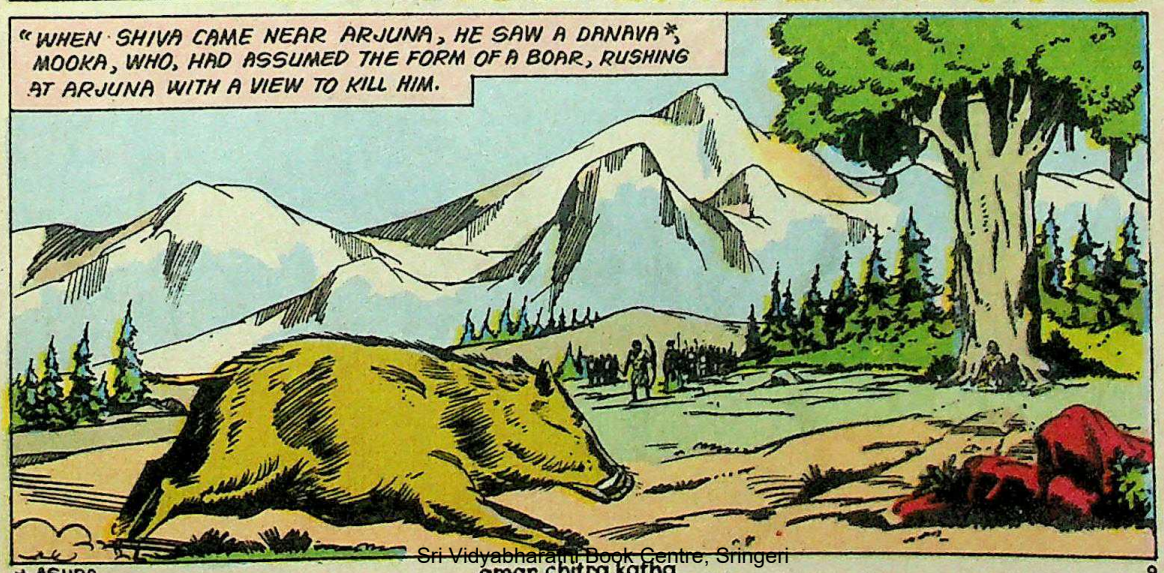

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* ASURA

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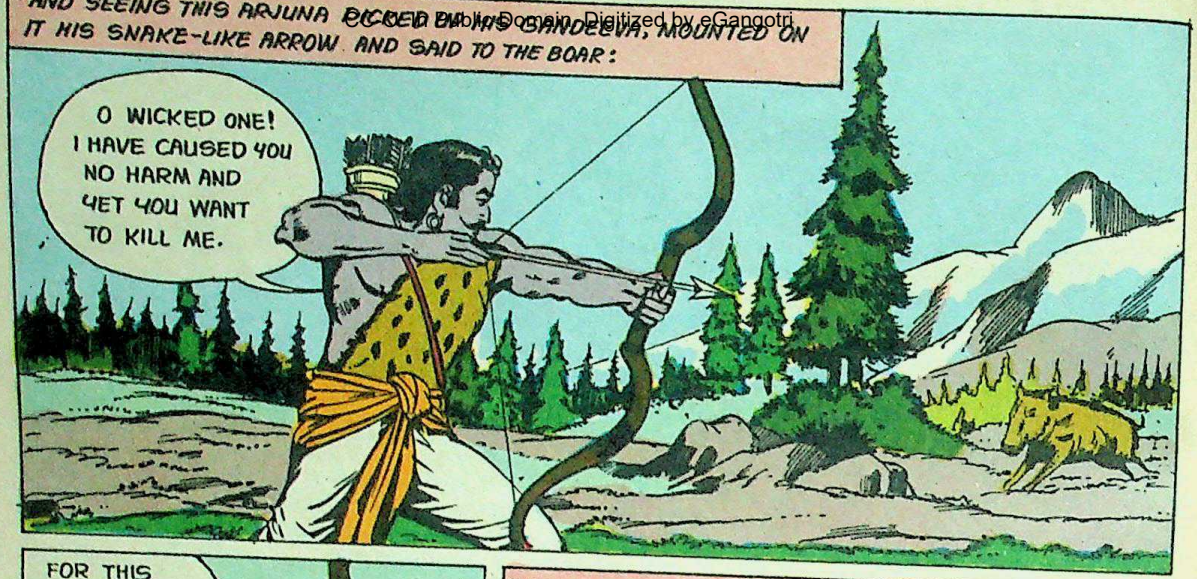

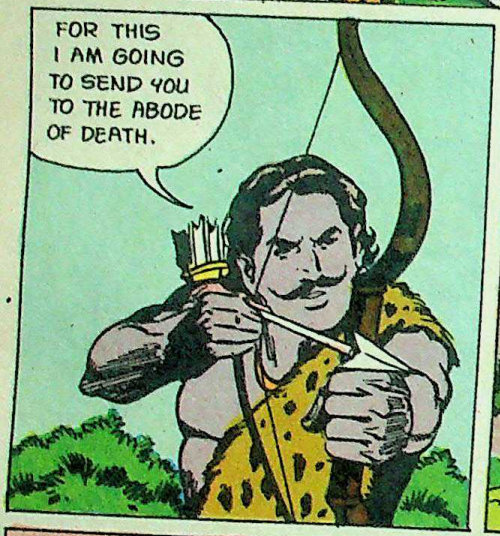

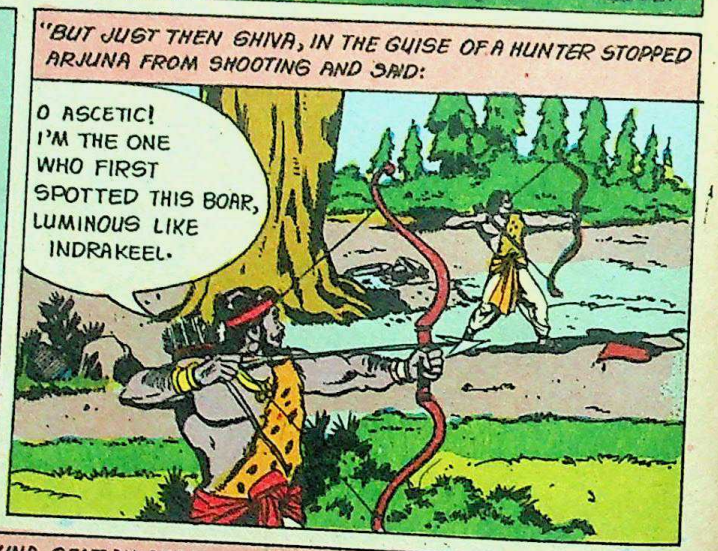

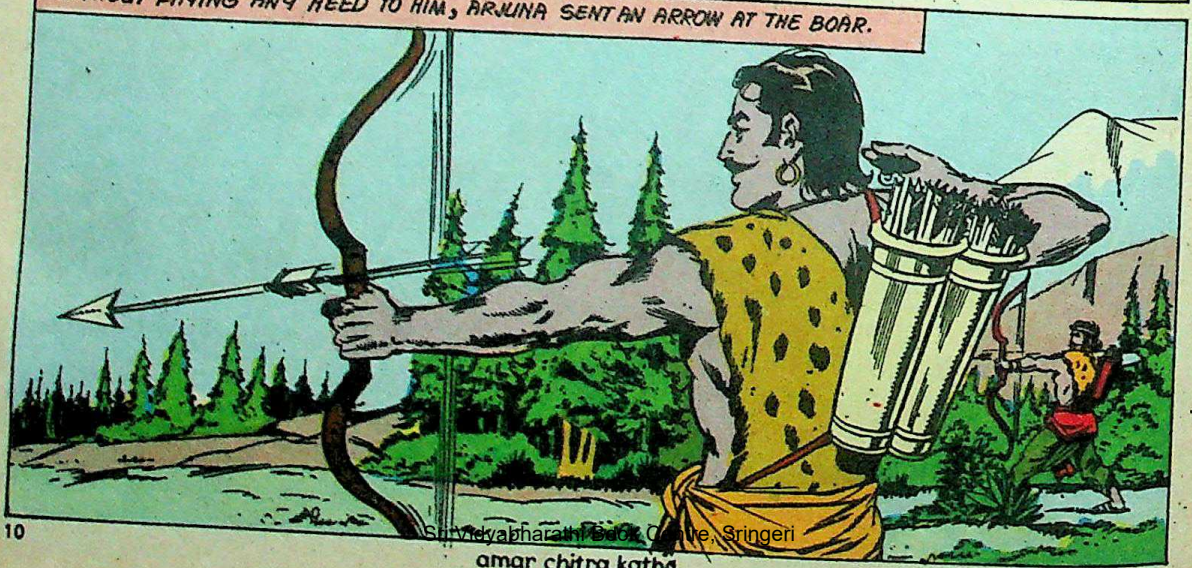

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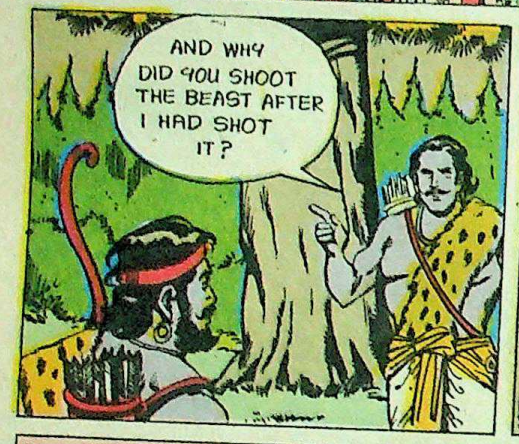
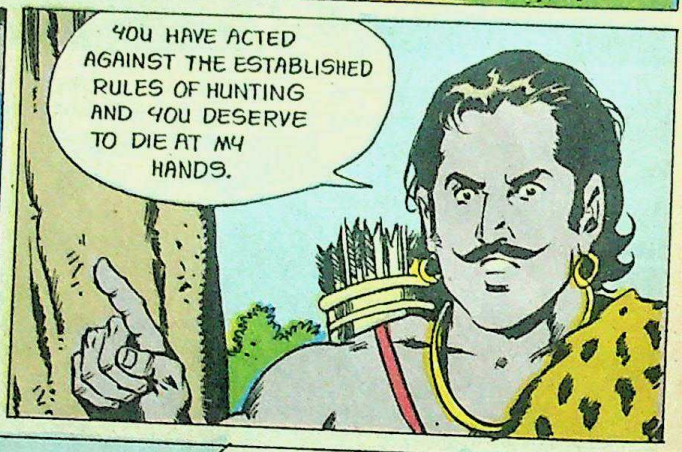
"THEN ARJUNA, LOOKING AT THE HUNTER, SAID WITH A SMILE:





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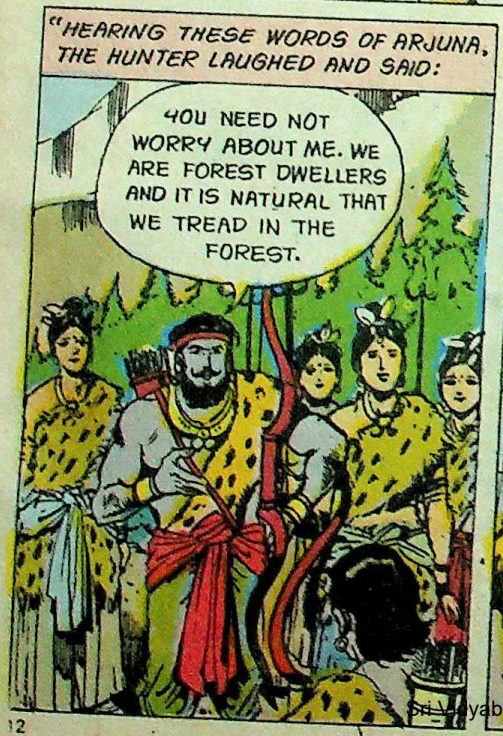

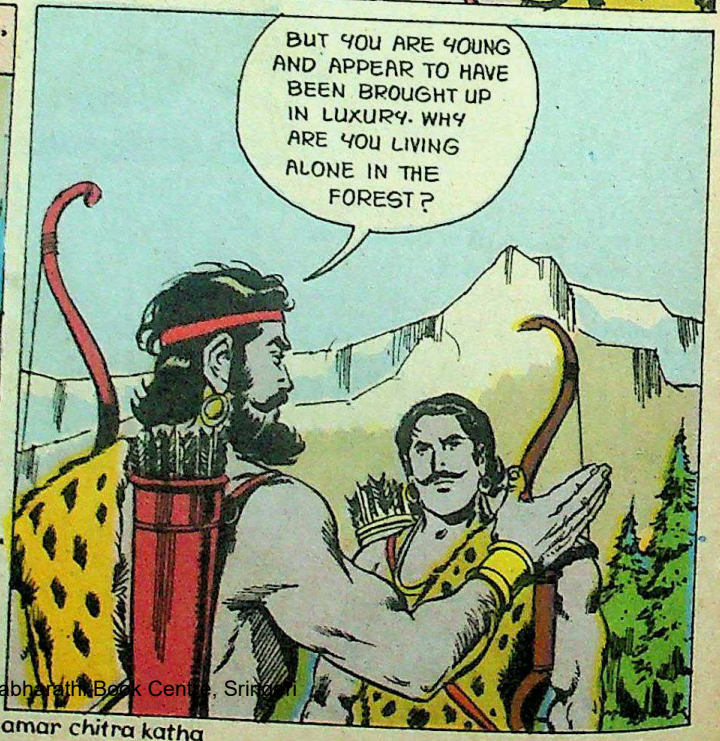

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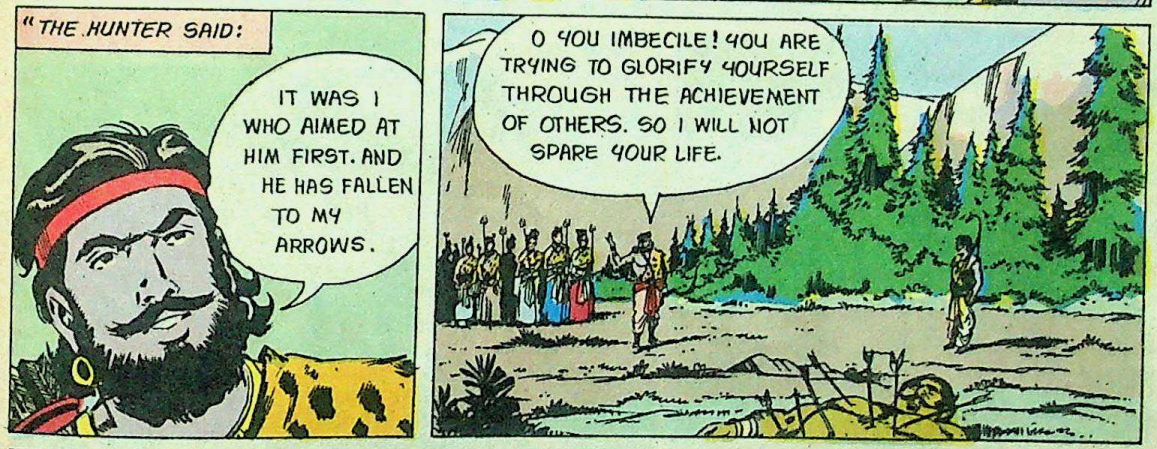

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ANGERED BY THESE WORDS, ARJUNA, STARTED SHOOTING HIS ARROWS. THE HUNTER, PLEASED AT HEART, EASILY CONTAINED THEM.

"AND HE SAID:

TRY AGAIN! TRY AGAIN! THE SHARPEST OF YOUR ARROWS.

"THEN, THE TWO ATTACKED EACH OTHER WITH SNAKE-LIKE ARROWS.

"LORD SHIVA EASILY ABSORBED THE RAIN OF ARROWS RELEASED BY ARJUNA AND REMAINED UNHURT AND UNMOVED LIKE A MOUNTAIN.

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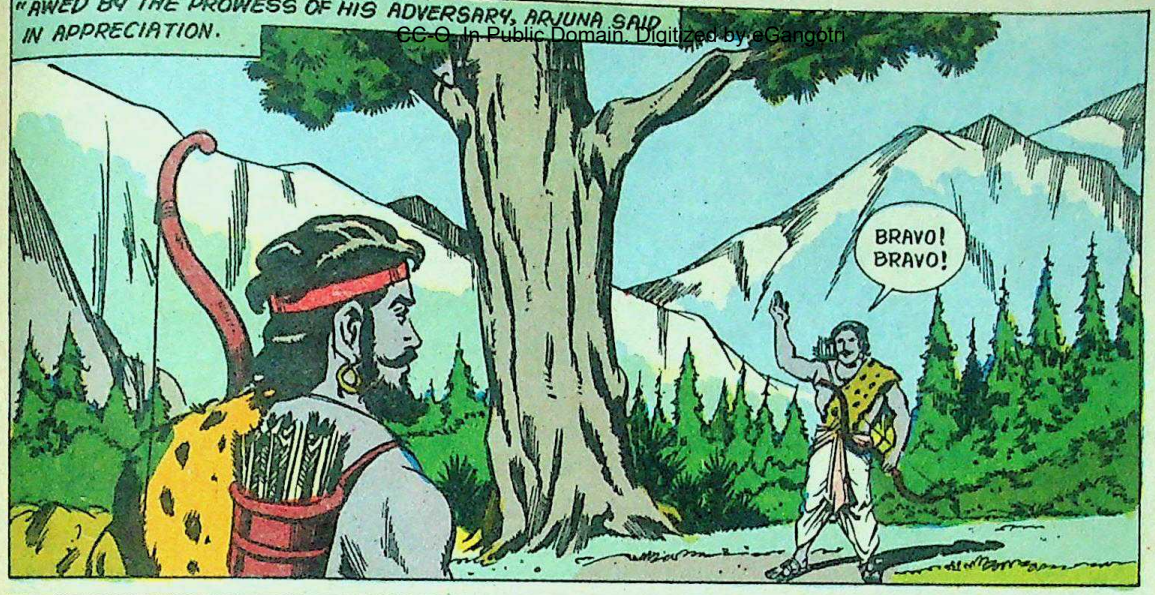

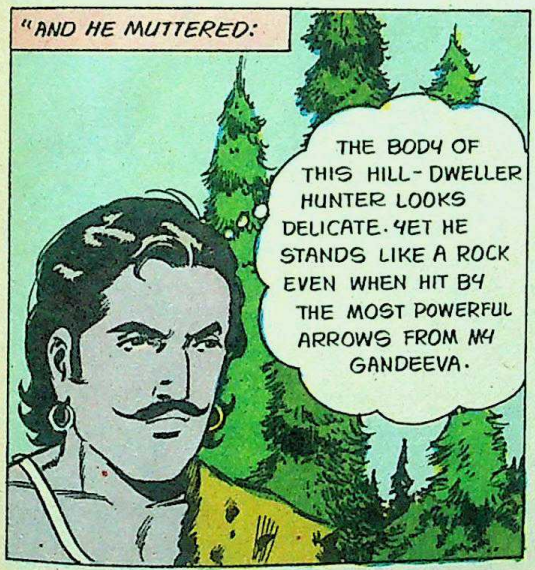

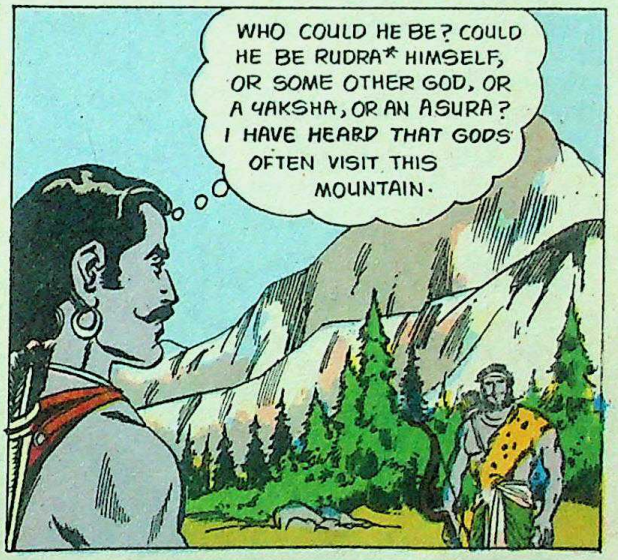

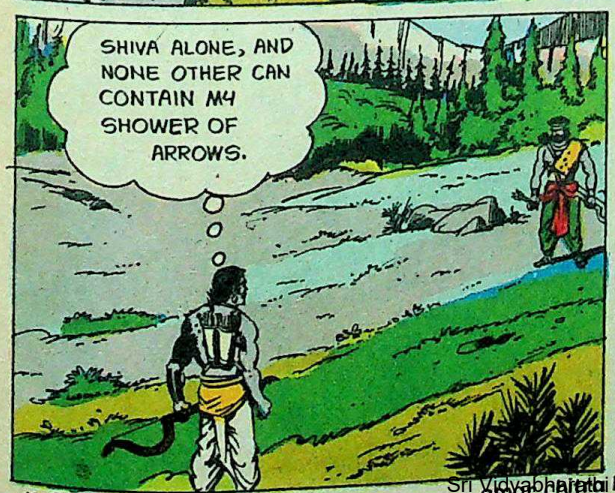

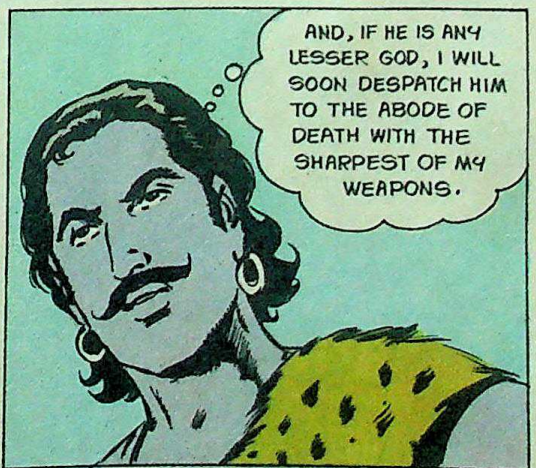

* SHIVA

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THINKING THUS, O MONARCH, ARJUNA ASSAILED THE HUNTER WITH A SHOWER OF ARROWS WHICH PIERCED THE LATTER LIKE THE RAYS OF THE SUN. BUT THE WIELDER OF SHOOLA ABSORBED ALL OF THEM IN THE MANNER A MOUNTAIN ABSORBS SHOWERS OF ROCKS.

"SOON ARJUNA NEARLY EXHAUSTED HIS ARROWS AND BECAME GREATLY ALARMED. HE REMEMBERED THAT HIS TWO QUIVERS PRESENTED BY AGNI AT THE TIME OF THE KHANDAVA-DAHANA WERE INEXHAUSTIBLE.

"HE AGAIN WONDERED:

WHO COULD BE THIS HUNTER WHO IS NOT AFFECTED BY MY ARROWS?

LET ME DESTROY HIM WITH THE TIP OF MY BOW.

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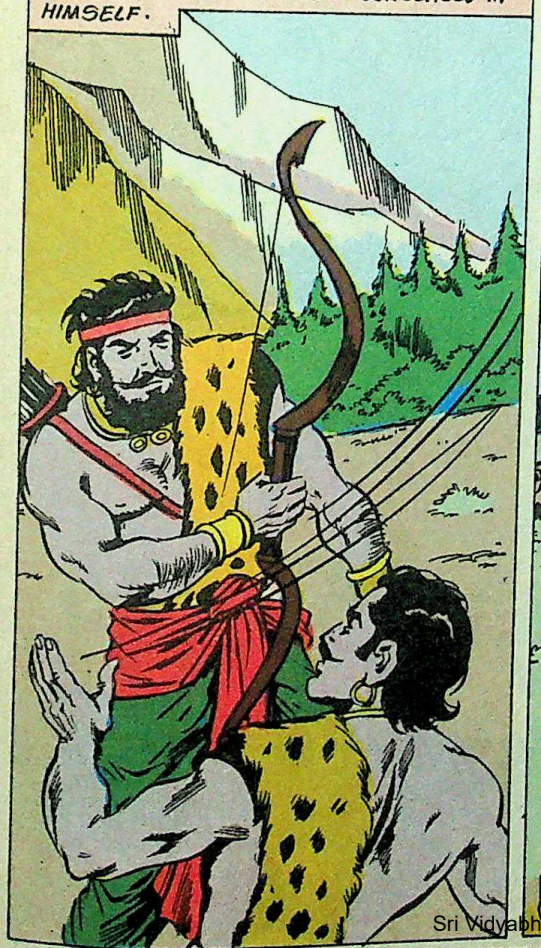
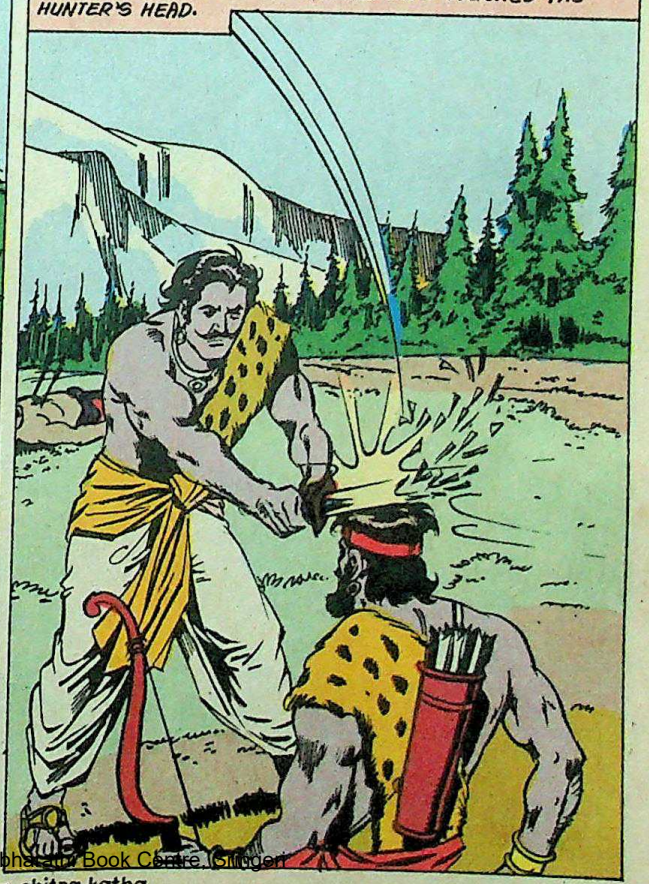
"THINKING THUS, ARJUNA ATTACKED THE HUNTER WITH HIS BOW AND ENCLOSING HIM WITHIN THE BOW-STRING, STARTED HITTING HIM WITH HIS THUNDER-LIKE FIST.

"THE HUNTER SNATCHED AWAY ARJUNA'S CELESTIAL BOW AND HAD IT CONCEALED IN HIMSELF.



"THEN ARJUNA, DESIROUS OF ENDING THE BATTLE, TOOK A SWORD AND HIT THE HUNTER ON HIS HEAD. BUT THE SWORD, WHICH COULD CUT THROUGH A STONE, SHATTERED INTO PIECES AS SOON AS IT TOUCHED THE HUNTER'S HEAD.



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"THEN ARJUNA STARTED HURLING TREES AND ROCKS. BUT THE LORD, IN THE GUISE OF A HUNTER, ABSORBED ALL THESE.

"THEN THE MIGHTY PARTHA* STARTED FISTING THE INDOMITABLE HUNTER WHO RETURNED THE BLOWS, CAUSING MUCH PAIN TO THE SON OF KUNTI.

"THEN THEY WRESTLED WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH THE RUBBING OF THEIR BODIES SPARKS AND SMOKE EMANATED.

"THEN, SMOTHERED BY SHIVA IN A HUG, ARJUNA FELL TO THE GROUND LIKE A LIFELESS LUMP.

* SON OF PRITHA (ARJUNA)

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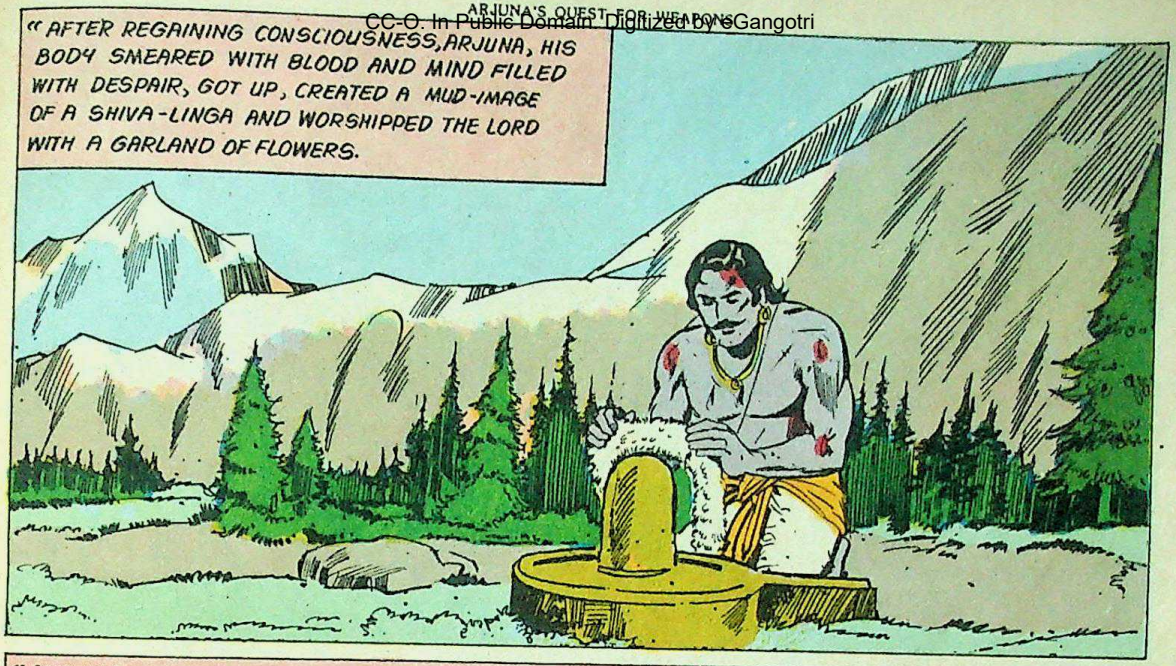

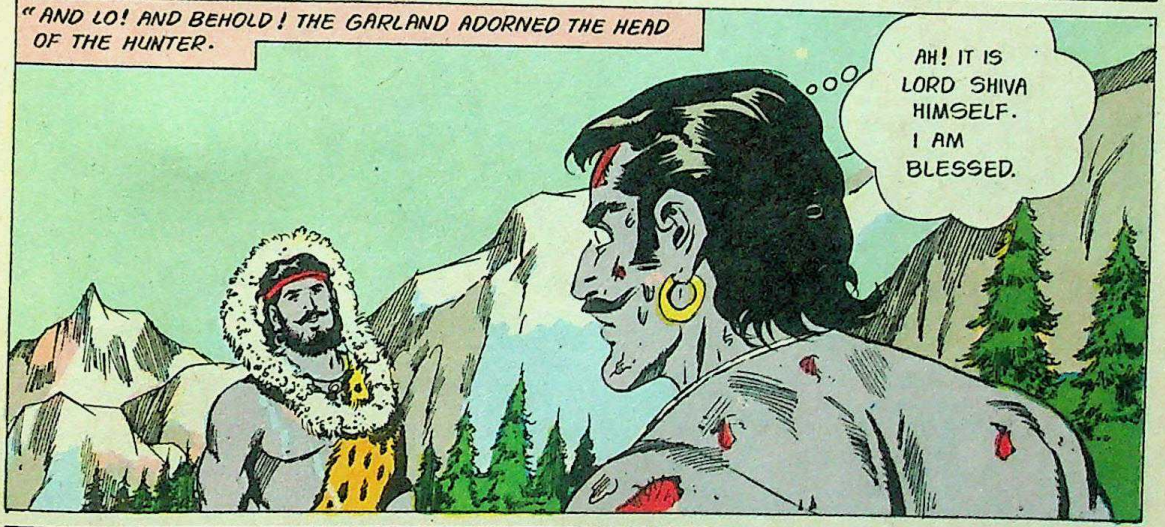

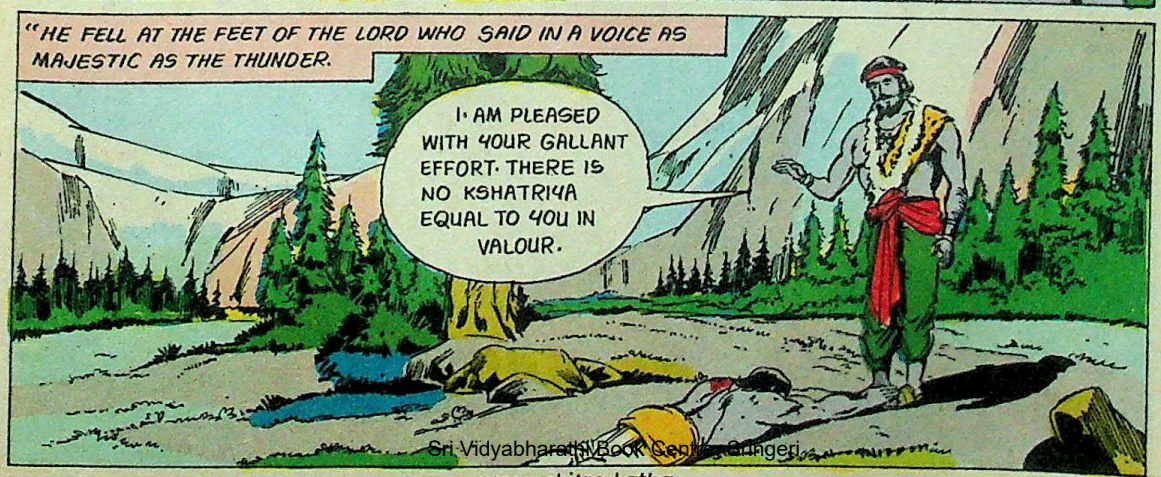

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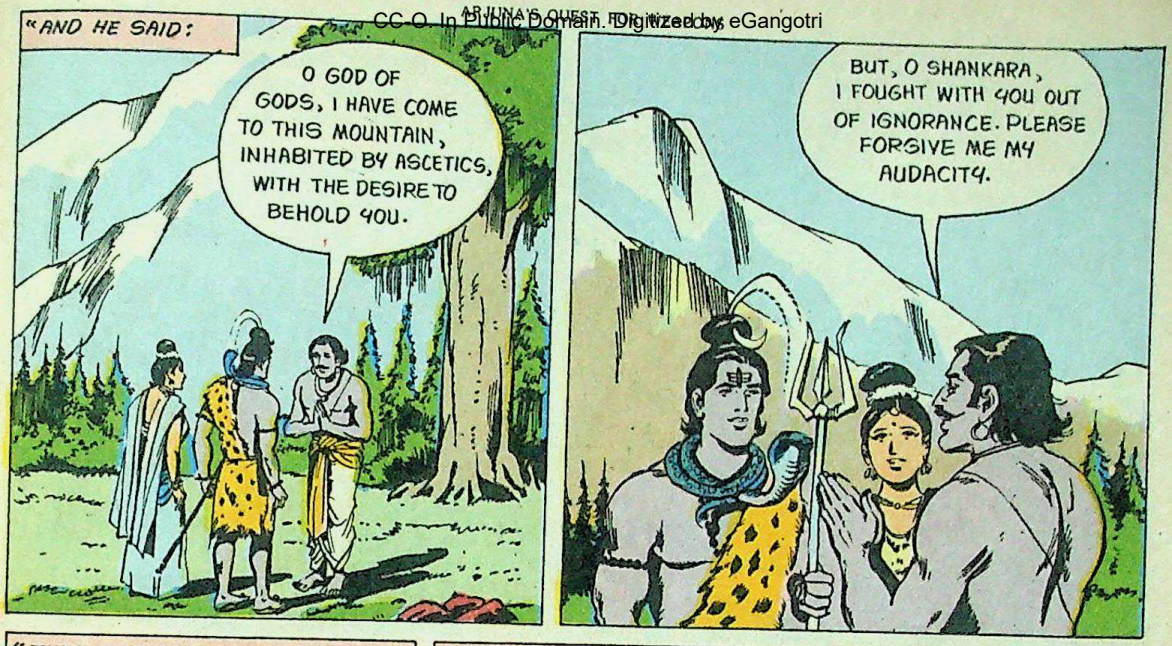

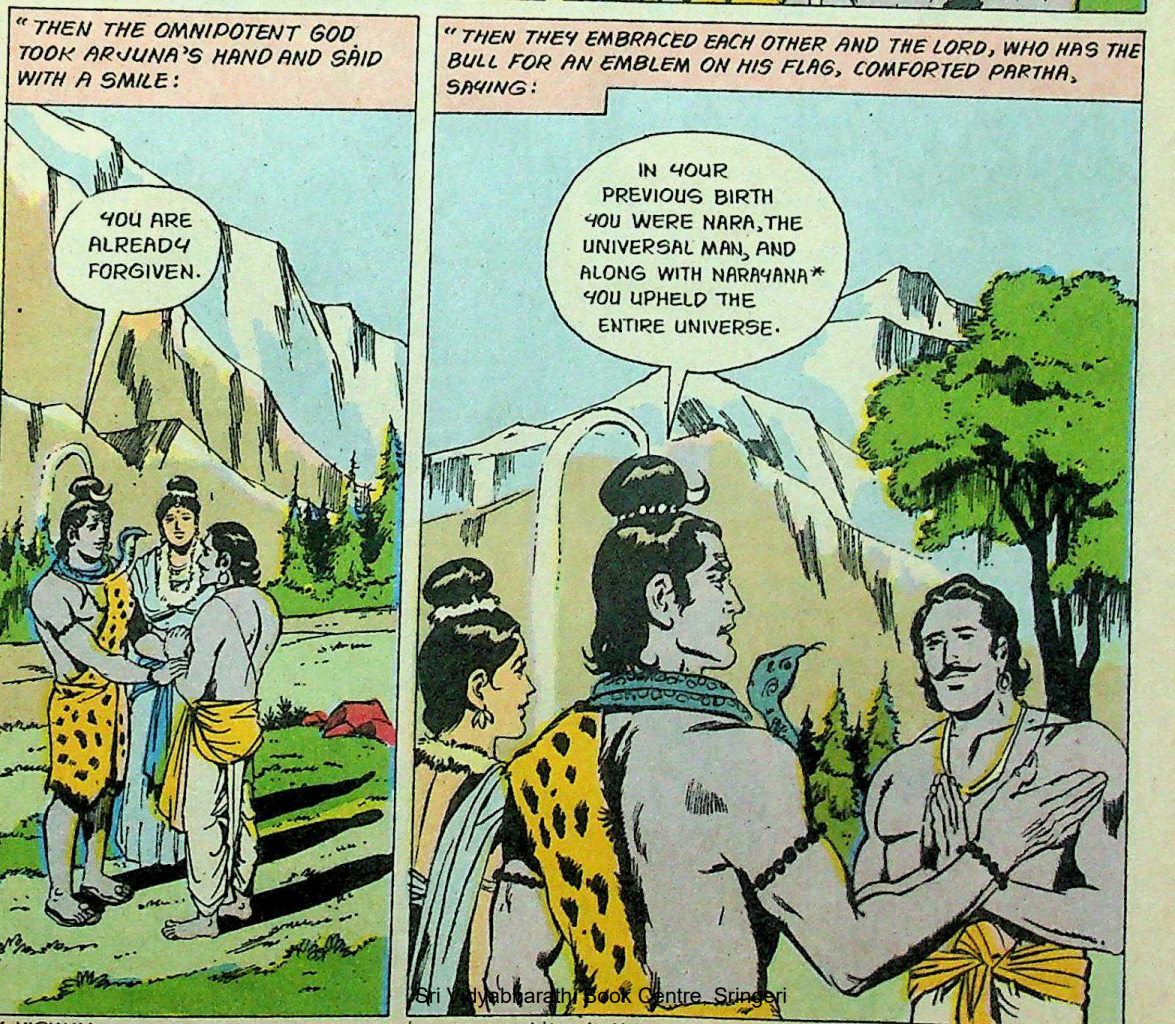

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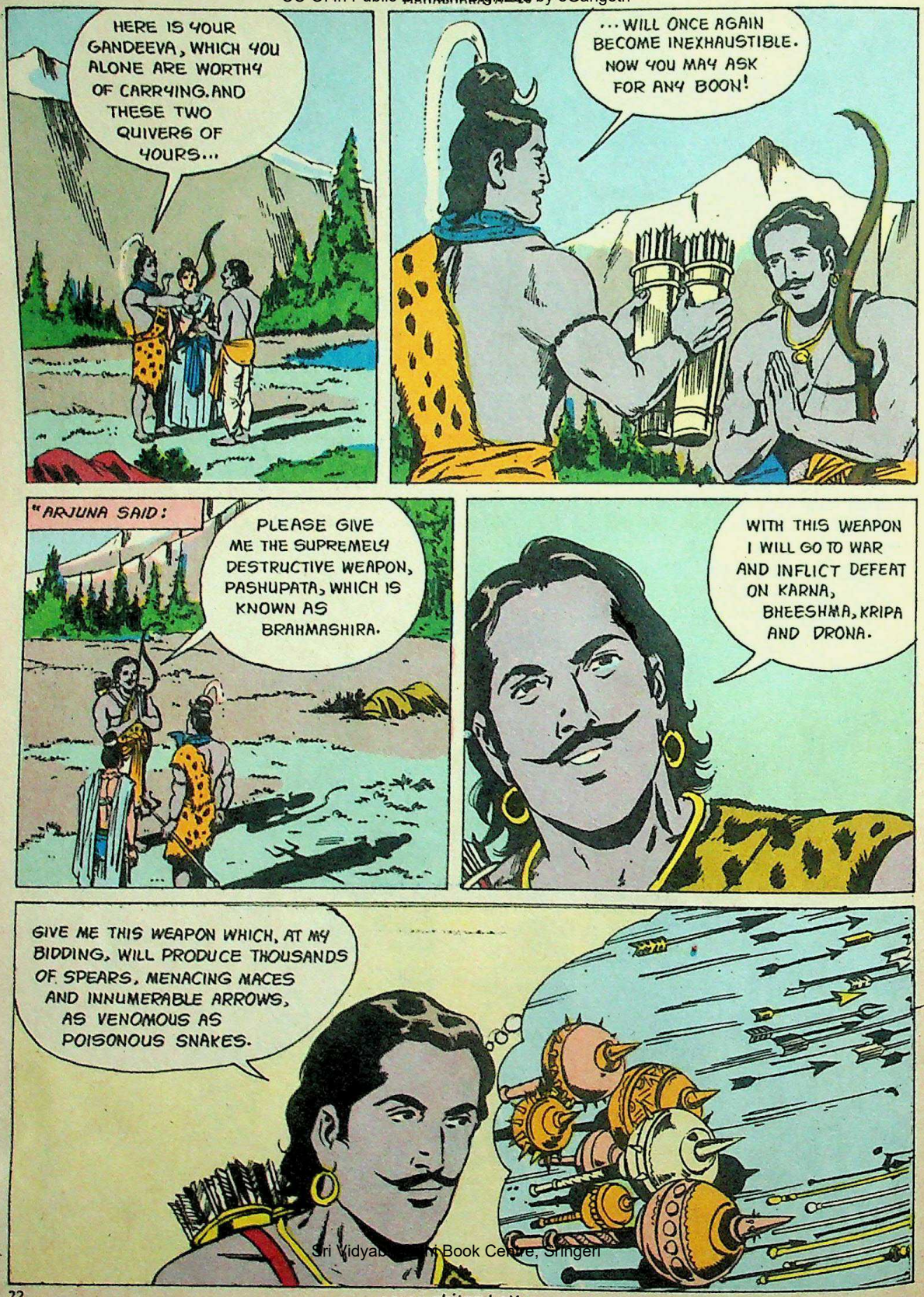

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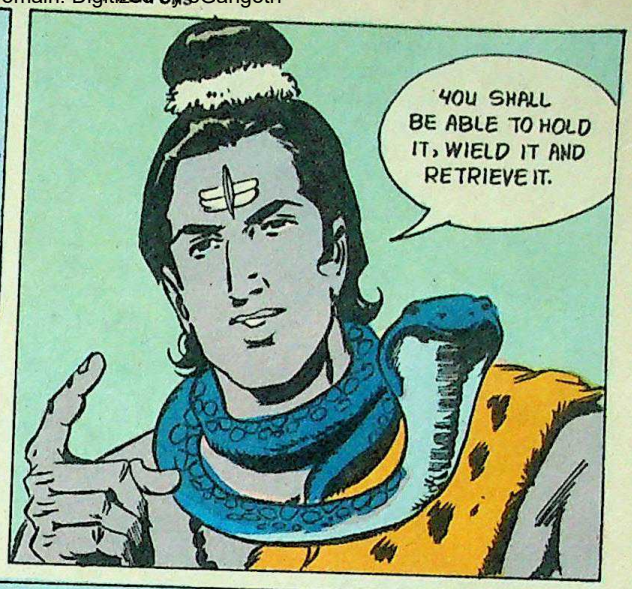

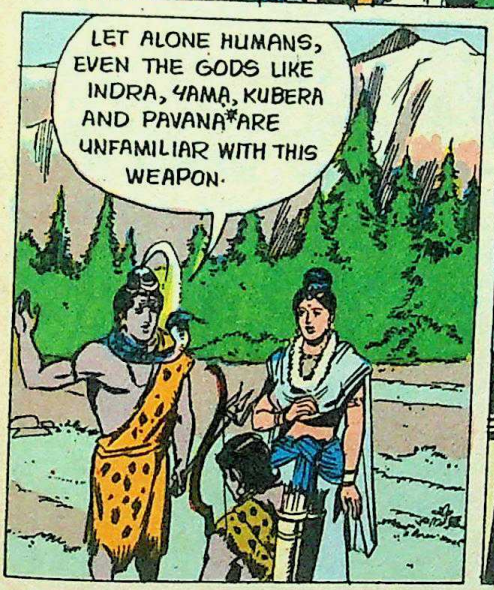

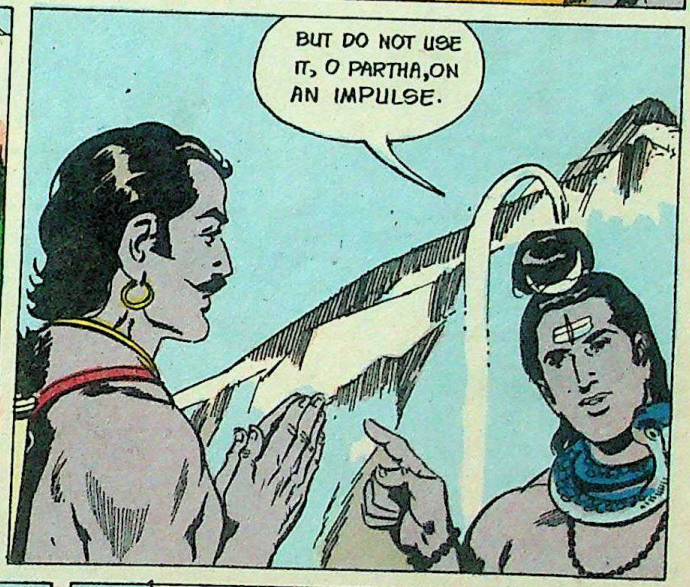

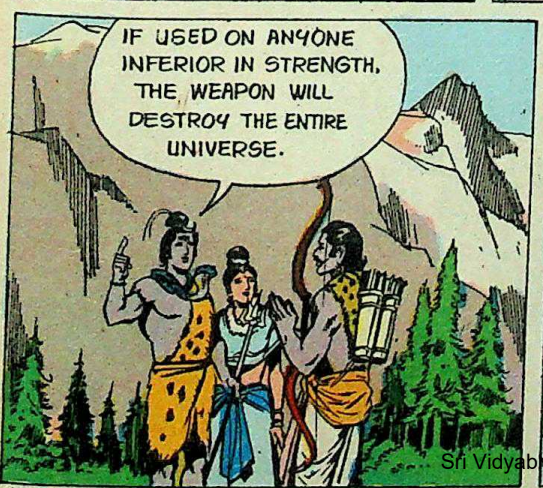

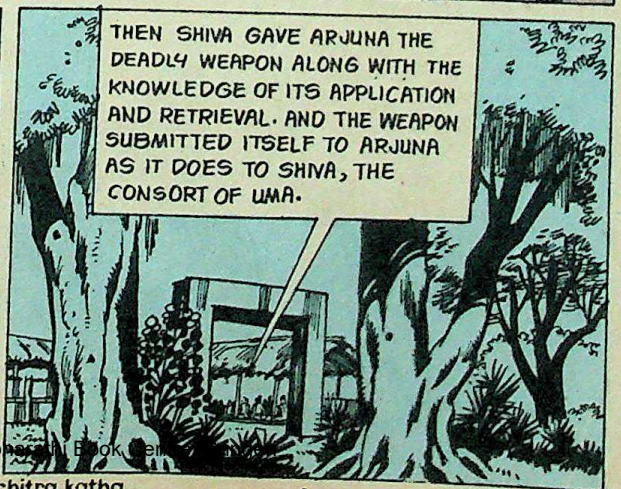

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* GOD OF WIND

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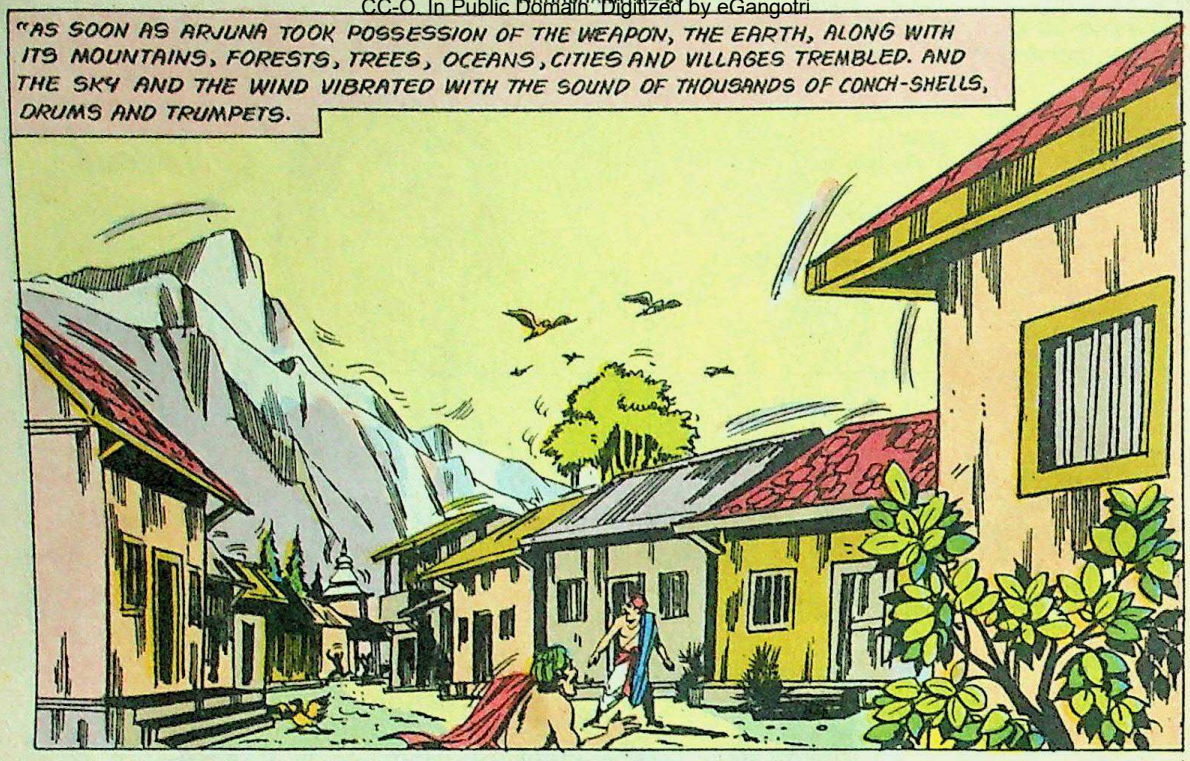

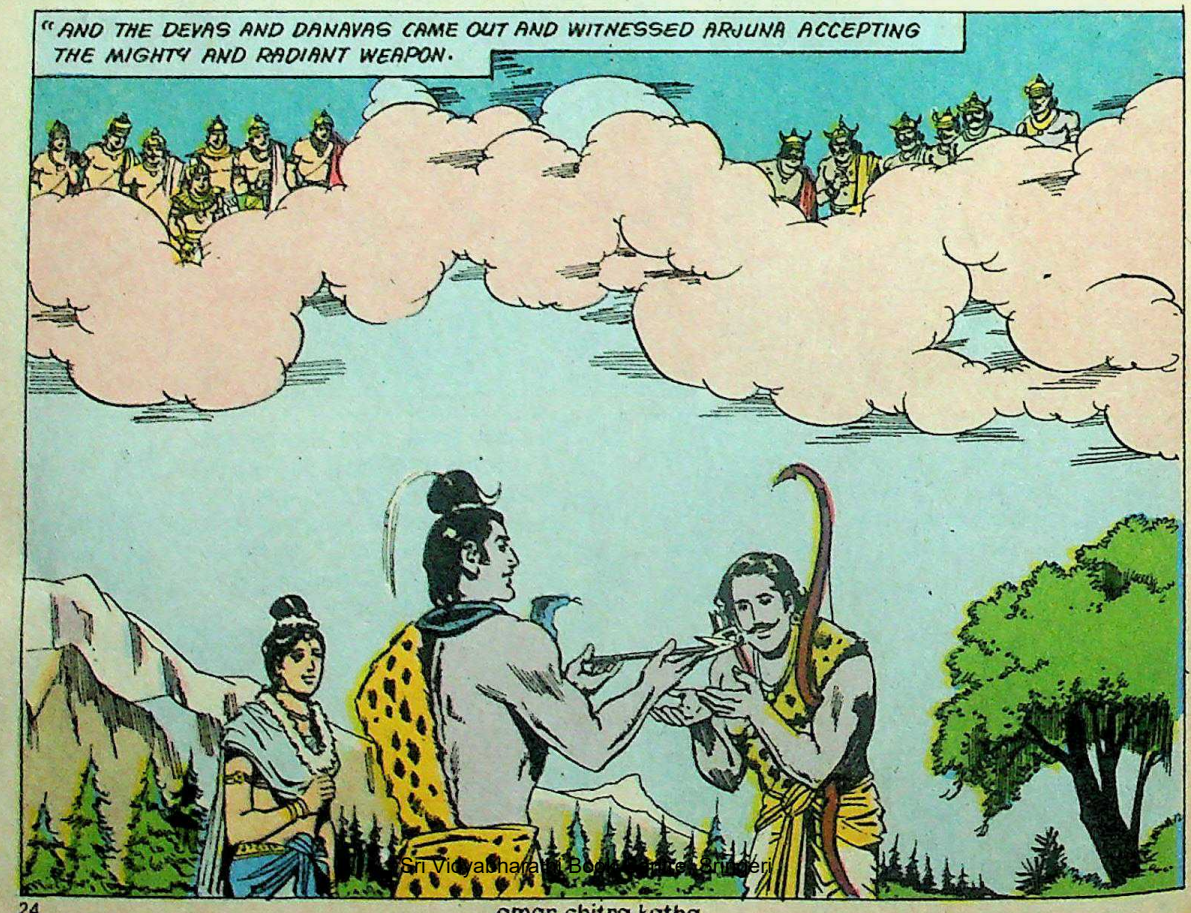

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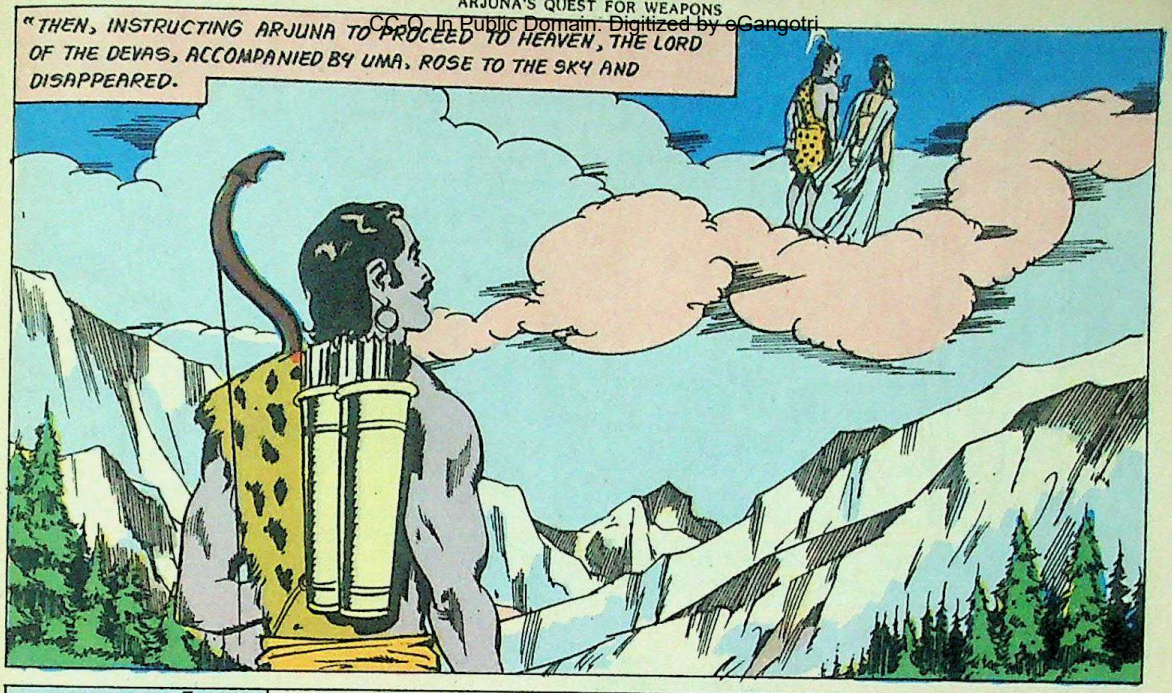

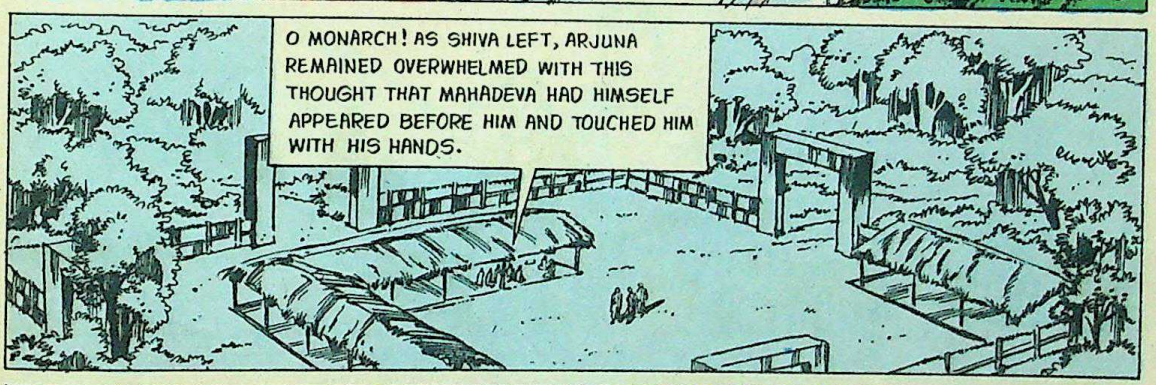

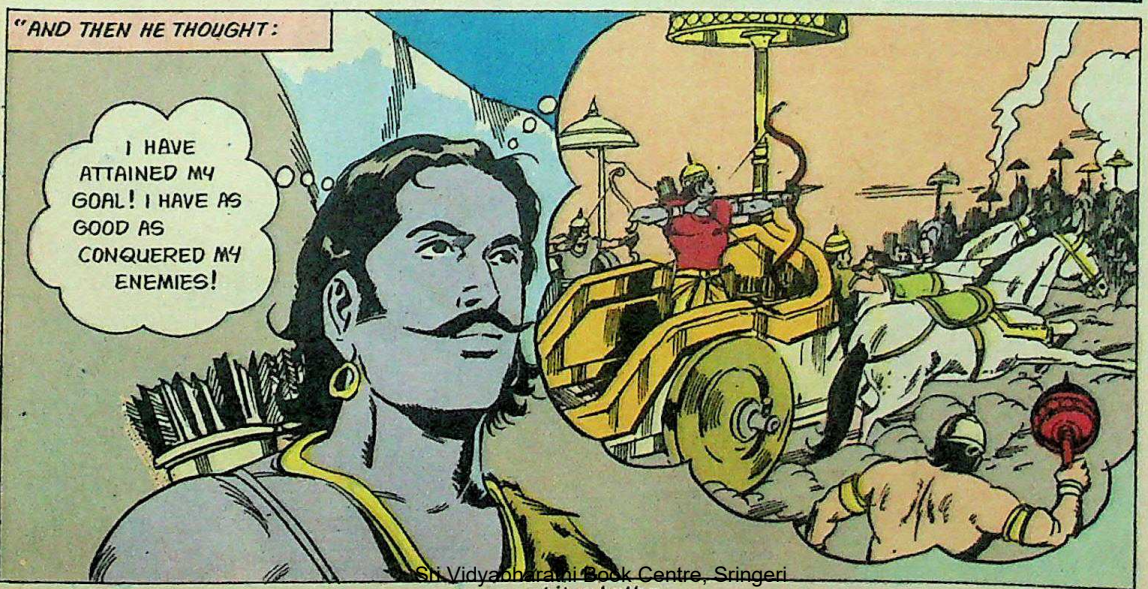

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AS THE ALL-POWERFUL PARTHA PONDERED THUS, VARUNA, THE LORD OF THE WATERS, APPEARED BEFORE HIM MAKING THE PLACE BRIGHT WITH THE GLOW OF HIS GEM-LIKE COMPLEXION.

"ALONG WITH HIM CAME THE AQUATIC ANIMALS, THE SNAKES, THE RULING GODS OF THE RIVERS, THE DAITYAS * AND THE SADHYAS *.

"THEN CAME KUBERA +, ON A RADIANT CHARIOT. HIS COMPLEXION WAS AS GOLDEN AS THE WATERS OF THE JAMBU RIVER. ALL THE YAKSHAS CAME WITH HIM.

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* DIFFERENT KINDS OF BEINGS + GOD OF WEALTH.

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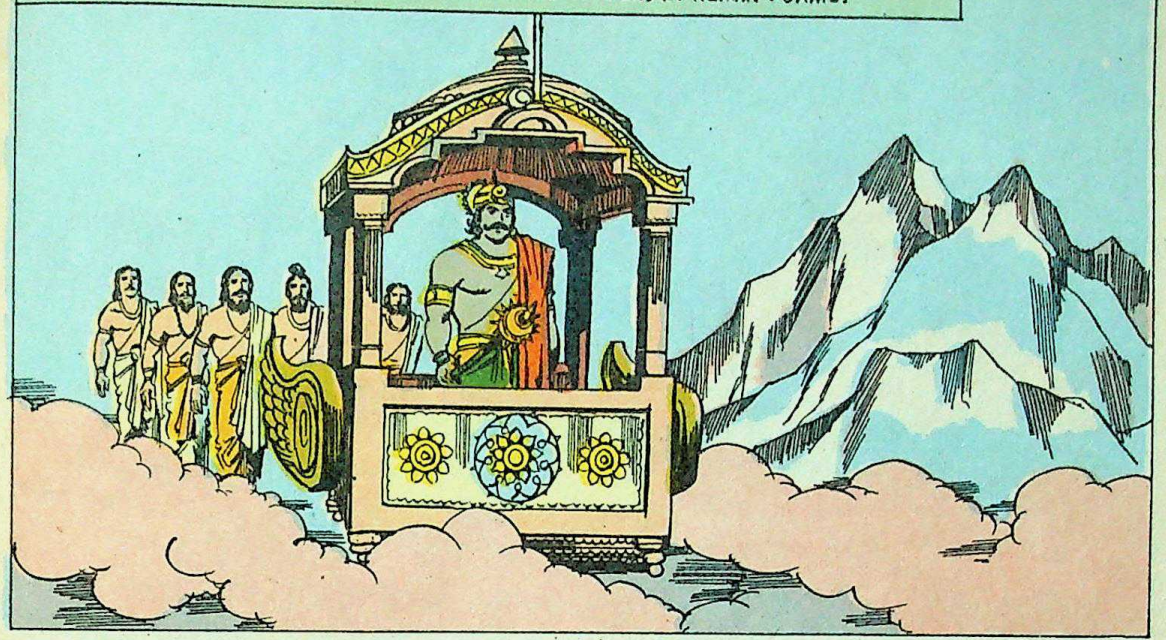
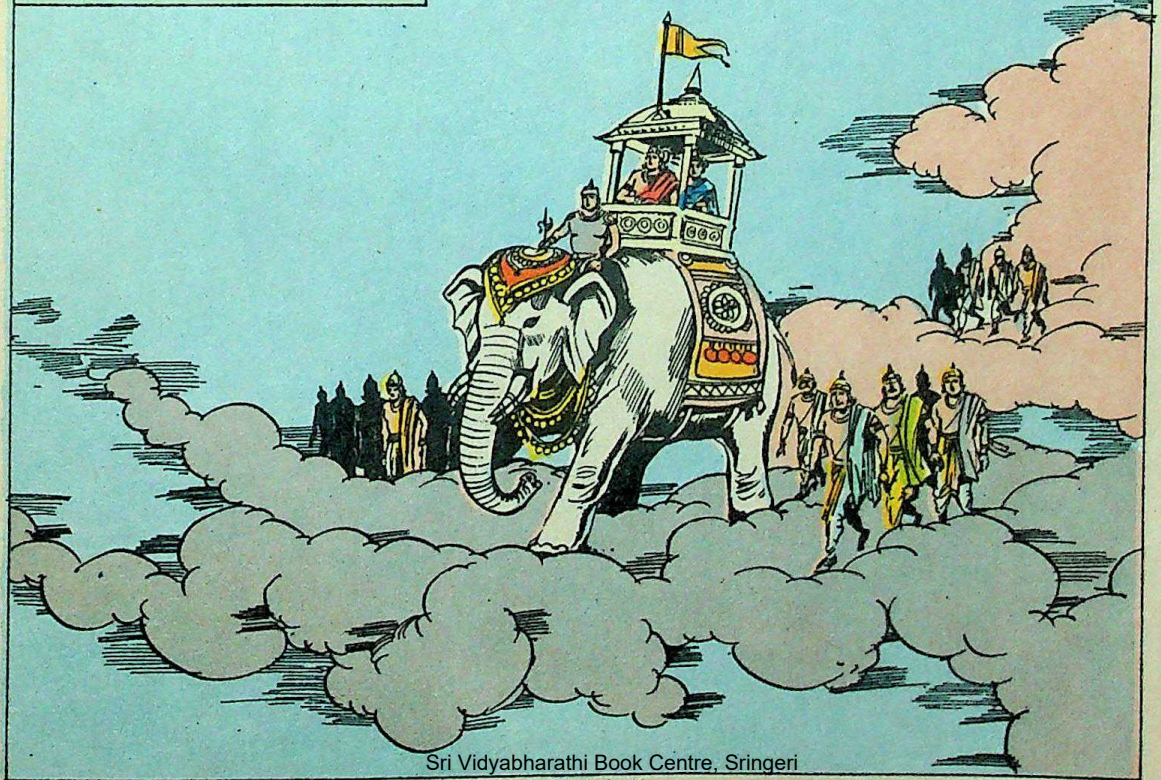
"IN ANOTHER VIMANA* CAME YAMA, THE GOD OF DEATH, THE DESTROYER OF ALL THE CREATURES. HE, THE SON OF SURYA, CARRIED IN HIS HAND THE DANDA, THE ROD OF DESTINY, AND CAME WITH THE ANCESTRAL SPIRITS OF MEN, IN HUMAN FORMS.



"IMMEDIATELY AFTER THAT, CAME INDRA, THE KING OF DEVAS, RIDING ON HIS ELEPHANT AIRAVATA. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS CONSORT, INDRANI **, AND ALL THE DEVAS.



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* AERIAL CHARIOT ** SHACHI

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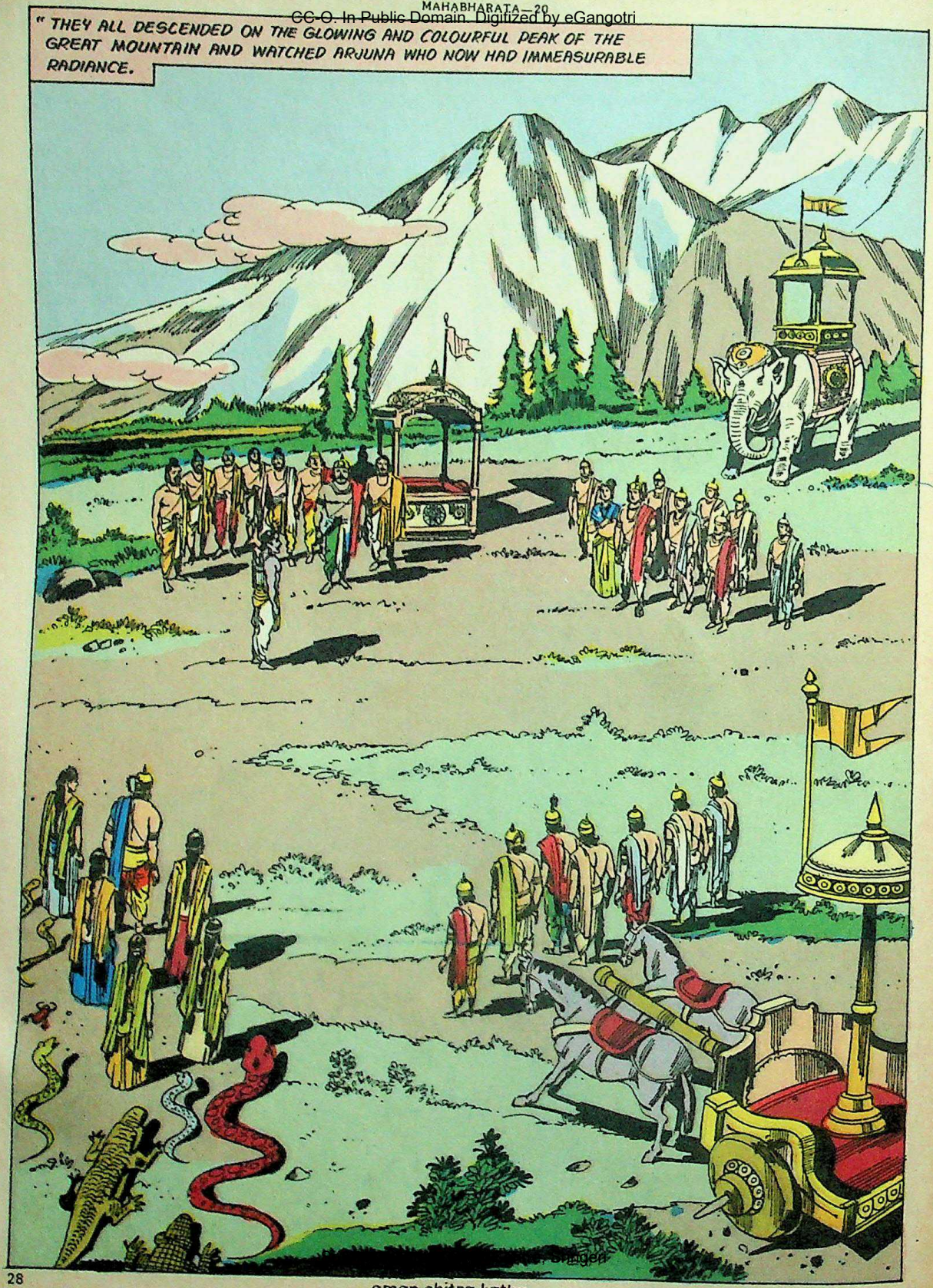

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"THEN YAMA, THE MASTER OF DHARMA, WHO HAD STATIONED HIMSELF IN THE SOUTH, SAID IN A THUNDERING VOICE:
O ARJUNA! LOOK AT US. WE THE LOKAPALAS, THE RULERS OF DIFFERENT WORLDS, ARE HERE.
IN YOUR PREVIOUS INCARNATION YOU WERE NARA, THE GREAT SOUL. BY THE DESIGN OF BRAHMA YOU HAVE BEEN REBORN AS A MAN...
...TO TRIUMPH IN BATTLE OVER THE GALLANT AND THE RIGHTEOUS BHEESHMA, DESCENDED FROM A VASU AND...
...TO INFLICT DEFEAT ON THE KSHATRIYAS WHO ARE PROTECTED BY DRONA, THE SON OF BHARADWAJA...
...AND TO KILL THE MIGHTY DANAVAS INCLUDING NIVATAKAVACHAS, WHO ARE BORN AS MEN...

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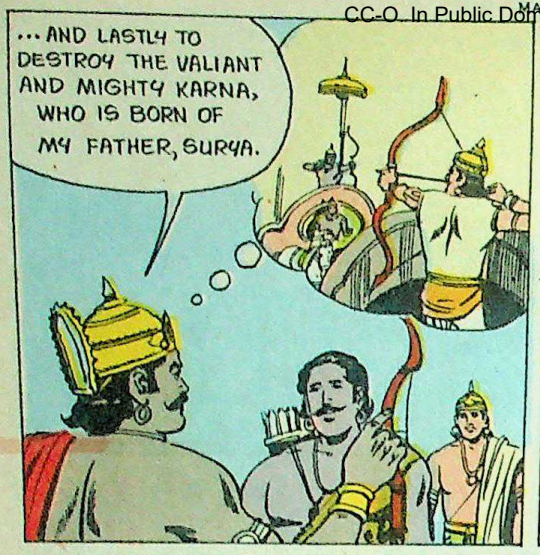

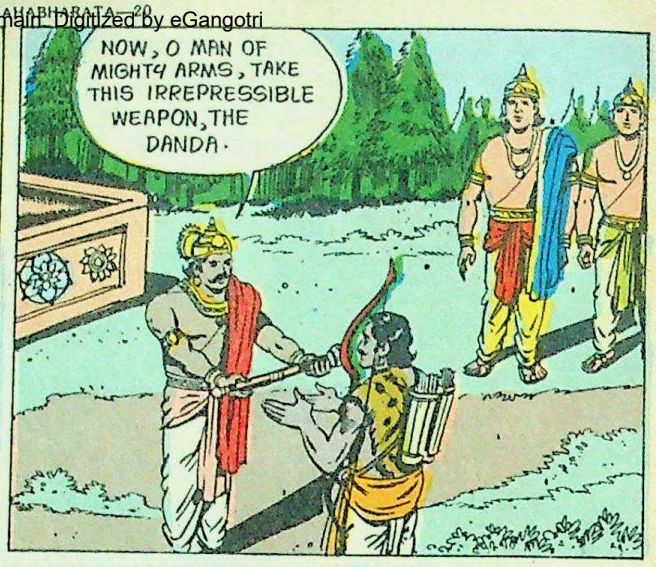

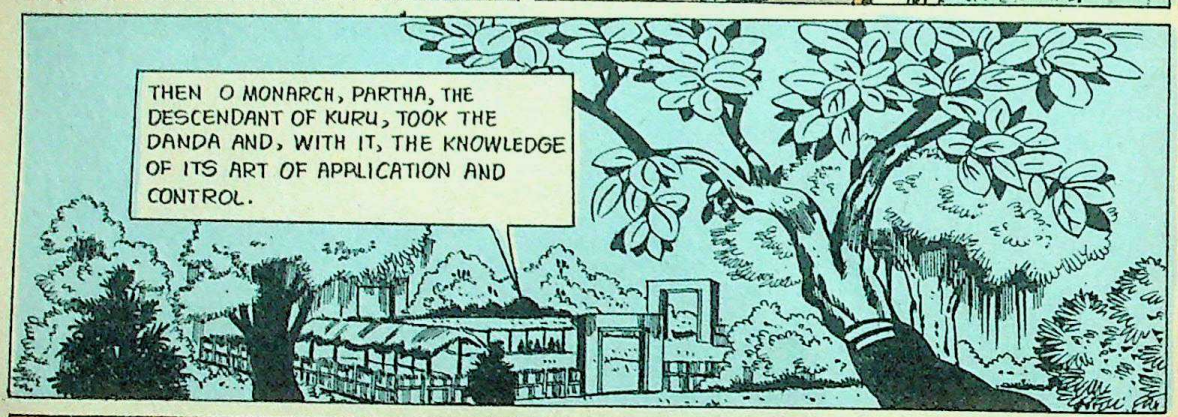

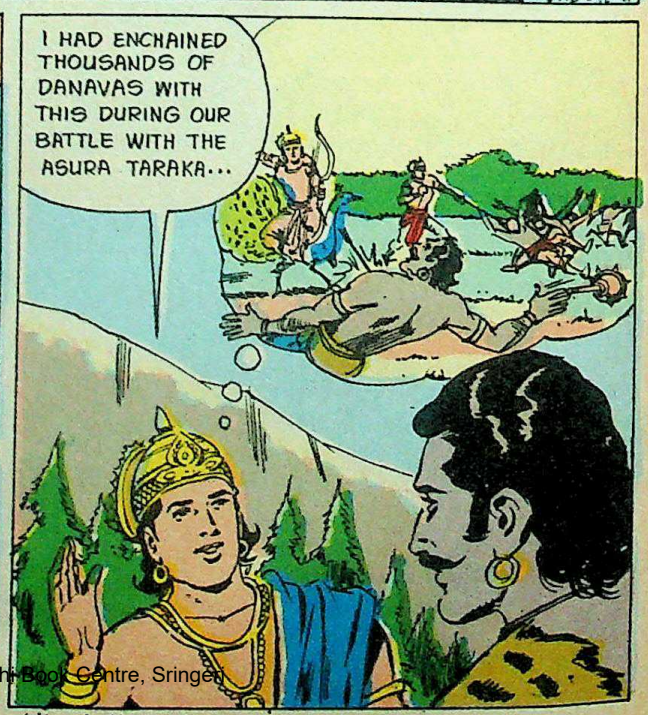

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* HEAVEN

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THERE YOU HAVE TO PERFORM CERTAIN DUTIES FOR THE DEVAS. SO GET READY.

MATALI* WILL SOON COME WITH HIS CHARIOT TO TAKE YOU THERE.

"THEN DHANANJAYA, AWESTRUCK ON SEEING ALL THESE LOKAPALAS, DEVOTEDLY WORSHIPPED THEM WITH FRUITS AND WATER.

THE LOKAPALAS TOOK LEAVE OF HIM AND WENT BACK TO THEIR RESPECTIVE WORLDS.

THUS ENDS THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL HISTORY THE MAHABHARATA.

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* CHARIOTEER OF INDRA

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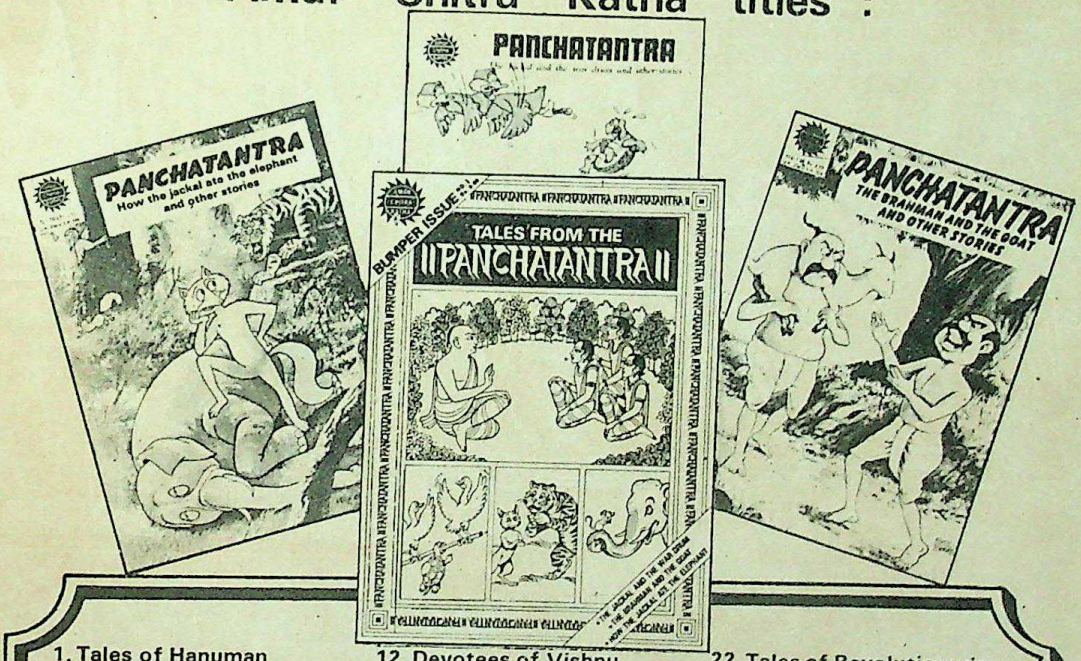

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